

## Amendments to the Specification

Please replace the existing Abstract with the following amended Abstract:

A surgical suturing device having an axis extending between a proximal end and a distal end is operable to move a suture through body tissue. A handle assembly is coupled to an elongated shaft having a hollow configuration. An actuating rod is disposed to extend between the handle assembly and the shaft. A needle assembly at the distal end of the actuating rod is movable with the actuating rod between an extended state and a retracted state. Bifurcated portions ~~of the needle assembly~~ define a suture slot, ~~the bifurcated portions have~~ by having a proximate relationship ~~when the needle assembly is in the retracted state~~ and having a separated relationship ~~when the needle assembly is in the extended state~~. The needle assembly is biased to the retracted state and the bifurcated portions are biased to the separated relationship. A handle assembly is operable to move the needle assembly between a free suture state and a captured suture state. ~~In an associated method of use, the needle is bifurcated to form at least one pair of arms to finding a suture slot.~~